

Message Text

SECRET

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3761
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NY IMMEDIATE
USMISSION SINAI
DIA WASHDC
SECDEF WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 7879

EXDIS - MIL ADDEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: MOPS MARR IS SY LE PLO
SUBJ: DISCUSSION WITH DMI GAZIT ON DEVELOPMENTS IN S LEBANON

1. DATT, JOINED BY POLOFF, HAD MEETING JUNE 21 WITH IDF
DIRECTOR OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE GAZIT TO DISCUSS DEVELOP-
MENTS IN LEBANON AS FOLLOW UP TO AMBASSADOR'S WEEKEND
CONVERSATION WITH WEIZMAN.

2. GAZIT CLAIMED THAT HE COULD NOT MAKE A GOOD ESTIMATE OF
THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON -- EVEN FOR HIS OWN
PRINCIPALS. THERE SIMPLY WERE TOO MANY LOOSE ENDS INVOLVED.

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PRESENTING HIS OWN VIEW, GAZIT SAID THAT EVENTS ARE BEING
INFLUENCED BY TWO COINCIDENTAL BUT TOTALLY UNRELATED
OCCURRENCES: THE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL ON JUNE 13 AND THE
DEATH OF TONY FRANJIYAH. THE ISRAELI PULLOUT HAD CREATED A
NEW AND UNCLEAR SITUATION IN THE SOUTH. THE DEATH OF TONY
FRANJIYAH WAS LIKELY TO LEAD TO FURTHER BLOODSHED IN THE
NORTH AND A FRANJIYAH VENDETTA AGAINST THE PHALANGE.

GAZIT WAS UNCERTAIN WHETHER THIS WOULD LEAD TO A MARONITE CIVIL WAR. DESPITE THEIR LINKS TO THE FRANJIYAHs, HE DID NOT BELIEVE THE SYRIANS WOULD TAKE ANY SIGNIFICANT ACTION ON THEIR BEHALF.

3. AS FOR THE LEBANESE ARMY, GAZIT DOUBTED THAT THE GOL WAS IN A POSITION TO SEND TROOPS TO THE SOUTH. SINCE THE SITUATION IN THE NORTH COULD EXPLODE AT ANY TIME, THE GOL HAS NO INTENTION OF SENDING ITS TROOPS FAR FROM HOME. GAZIT NOTED THAT THE GOL DOES NOT EVEN HAVE A SECURE ROUTE TO GET ITS TROOPS TO THE SOUTH.

4. GAZIT DID NOT SEE THE SYRIANS MOVING SOUTHWARDS AT THE PRESENT TIME. HE ATTRIBUTED THIS TO THE FACT THAT "WE DONT WANT THEM THERE." (GAZIT'S "WE" REFLECTS HIS LONG-HELD PERSONAL POSITION ON THE SUBJECT AND WE ARE UNCERTAIN AS TO WHETHER GOI AS A WHOLE SHARES THIS VIEW.) HE ADDED THAT THE SYRIANS REMEMBER THE UNPLEASANT INCIDENT A YEAR AND A HALF AGO WHEN THEY DEPLOYED TROOPS AROUND NABATIYAH AND THE ISRAELIS TOLD THEM TO WITHDRAW. THE SYRIANS DONT WANT TO BE PUT IN THIS EMBARRASSING POSITION AGAIN.

5. THE PALESTINIANS WERE MOVING SOUTH AND CLAIMING TO BE STAY-BEHINDS, ACCORDING TO GAZIT. HE CLAIMED THEY HAD A WRITTEN OR TACIT AGREEMENT WITH UNIFIL AND EVEN A MAP WHICH AUTHORIZED ARMED PALESTINIANS TO BE IN CERTAIN AREAS.

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WHEN THERE ARE MISUNDERSTANDINGS OVER THIS ISSUE, UNIFIL AND THE PLO LOOK AT THEIR MAP. ACCORDING TO THIS AGREEMENT, THE PALESTINIANS AGREE NOT TO ENTER VILLAGES; IF THEY DO, UNIFIL HAS THE RIGHT TO EVICT THEM. THERE IS ALSO A UNIFIL-PALESTINIAN AGREEMENT FOR THE SUPPLY OF NON-MILITARY PROVISIONS.

GAZIT WAS SKEPTICAL AS TO THE EXTENT OF INSPECTIONS ON SUPPLIES AND BELIEVED THAT MORE THAN NON-MILITARY GOODS WERE TRANSITTING THE UNIFIL LINES. DATT NOTED THAT FIGURES ON PALESTINIAN INFILTRATION HAVE BEEN FAIRLY STABLE DESPITE REPORTS OF CONTINUING MOVEMENTS SOUTH. GAZIT ADMITTED THAT HE DID NOT HAVE EXACT FIGURES BUT DOUBTED ANYONE ELSE HAD, EITHER. ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE HAD BEEN RECEIVING CONTRADICTORY REPORTS AS TO WHETHER INFILTRATION WAS BEING STEPPED UP. IN ANY CASE, THE CURRENT IDF ESTIMATE OF ARMED PALESTINIANS BEHIND UNIFIL LINES IS 400-500. HE ADDED THAT ONE OF THE DIFFICULTIES IN MAKING A RELIABLE COUNT IS THAT THE PALESTINIANS ARE CONSTANTLY ON THE MOVE. HE HAD NO INFORMATION WHETHER ANY PALESTINIANS HAD MOVED INTO THE TEN KILOMETER STRIP THE IDF HAD HELD UNTIL JUNE 13.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 7879

EXDIS - MIL ADDEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

IF THERE WAS ANY INFILTRATION HERE, IT WOULD ONLY BE
IN SMALL NUMBERS; A LARGER FORCE WOULD HAVE BEEN OB-
SERVED.

6. GAZIT ARGUED THAT UNIFIL HAS GIVEN UP OPPOSING ANY
KIND OF PALESTINIAN MILITARY ACTIVITY. UNIFIL HAD ORI-
GINALLY EMPLOYED ITS MILITARY CAPABILITY BUT HAD STOPPED
AFTER THE CLASH IN WHICH THE FRENCH CONTINGENT COMMANDER
WAS WOUNDED. IT HAD BEEN A QUESTION OF DETERMINATION
AND WHO WOULD STICK TO THEIR GUNS LONGEST; THE PLO PUT
UNIFIL TO THE TEST AND FOR POLITICAL REASONS UNIFIL DECIDED
NOT TO STOP INFILTRATIONS. GAZIT BELIEVED THAT IF UNIFIL

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HAD HELD OUT A LITTLE LONGER, AT THE COST OF A FEW MORE DAYS

OF CLASHES, THE PALESTINIANS WOULD HAVE GIVEN UP INFILTRATION. GAZIT OPINED THAT UNIFIL IS NOW AN OBSERVER IN A GAME WHERE ONE SIDE PLAYS BY THE RULES (ISRAELIS) AND THE OTHER DOES NOT (PALESTINIANS).

7. AS FOR THE CHRISTIANS AND THE SHIITES IN THE ENCLAVES, THE MAIN PROBLEM IS THAT THEY HAVE BEEN FIGHTING FOR TWO YEARS FOR THEIR EXISTENCE. THEY KNOW THEIR ADVERSARIES WOULD DESTROY THEM IF THEY COULD. AS FAR AS THE UN IS CONCERNED, THE CHRISTIANS ARE UNWILLING TO TRUST IN "RES. 425, GOD, WALDHEIM AND ERSKINE." THE UN HAD WANTED THE IDF TO DO THE DIRTY JOB OF DISARMING THE CHRISTIANS BEFORE IT PULLED OUT ON JUNE 13. NONETHELESS, GAZIT STRESSED THAT ISRAEL WAS AND IS COMMITTED TO THE PROTECTION OF THESE VILLAGES FROM OUTSIDE THREATS. IN RESPONSE TO OUR QUESTION, GAZIT CLAIMED THE MILITIAS WERE NOT TAKING ORDERS FROM ANYBODY. THERE WAS NO SINGLE COMMANDER OF THE HALF A DOZEN PARTIES, FACTIONS AND GROUPS MAKING UP THE VERY WELL-ARMED MILITIAS.

8. GAZIT NOTED THAT THE JUNE 12 TACIT AGREEMENT BETWEEN NORTHERN COMMAND CG BEN-GAL AND ERSKINE COULD HAVE PROVIDED A MODUS VIVENDI FOR UNIFIL'S OPERATION IN THE ENCLAVES. HOWEVER, HOSS MADE THE "IDIOTIC" DECLARATION CALLING FOR HADDAD AND SHIDIAC'S TROOPS TO RETURN TO THEIR BARRACKS AND FOR THE MILITIAS TO BE DISARMED. THIS CREATED AN EXPLOSIVE SITUATION. THE MILITIAS, IN GAZIT'S OPINION, WOULD HAVE REMAINED LOYAL TO HADDAD IF THE ORIGINAL AGREEMENT HAD BEEN ADHERED TO. IN ANY CASE, THE SITUATION WAS NOW QUIET. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION WHY, GAZIT STATED THAT THE UNIFIL-CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIP SEEMED TO BE STABILIZING BECAUSE LOCAL UNIFIL COMMANDERS WERE COOPERATING WITH
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THE CHRISTIANS AND TACITLY RETURNING TO THE TERMS OF THE JUNE 12 AGREEMENT. NONETHELESS, EVEN IF THINGS WORK OUT FOR A FEW WEEKS, "THERE ARE MANY MINES IN THE ROAD THAT CAN BLOW THE SITUATION UP."

9. WHEN ASKED IF HE BELIEVED THE LEBANESE WERE SERIOUS ABOUT REASSERTING THEIR AUTHORITY IN THE SOUTH, GAZIT REPLIED THAT GOL PRONOUNCEMENTS TO THIS EFFECT WERE IDLE TALK. THE LEBANESE CANNOT AGREE ON WHAT TO DO; HOSS SAYS THE OPPOSITE OF BOUTROS AND SARKIS. HE STRESSED HIS VIEW THAT THE LEBANESE "HAVE NO INTENTION OF DOING ANYTHING AT ALL." NONETHELESS, GAZIT NOTED THE GOI CONTINUES TO FAVOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE LEBANESE ARMY IN THE SOUTH-- BUT THIS HAS TO BE DISCUSSED WITH ISRAEL. FOR EXAMPLE, THE ARMY SHOULD NOT PUT MUSLIM FORCES IN CHRISTIAN AREAS AND VICE VERSA. IF THE LEBANESE ARMY TRIES THIS WITHOUT PAYING DUE REGARD

FOR CONFESSIONAL SENSITIVITIES, THE SITUATION WOULD EXPLODE. WHEN ASKED HOW ISRAEL WOULD REACT TO SUCH A DEVELOPMENT, GAZIT PARRIED QUESTION AND SAID, "WE'LL CROSS THAT BRIDGE WHEN WE COME TO IT."

10. GAZIT STRESSED THAT SOUTH LEBANON IS AN AREA WHICH WILL NOT BE STABILIZED FOR A LONG TIME. WHILE UNIFIL IS THERE, PROBLEMS WILL BE SHOVED UNDER THE CARPET. THE SITUATION MAY QUIET DOWN BUT THERE IS NO SOLUTION IN SIGHT. HOWEVER, THE ISRAELI COMMITMENT TO THE CHRISTIANS AND THE SHIAS IN THE SOUTH IS UNLIKELY TO BE TESTED AS LONG AS UNIFIL IS AROUND. DUE TO ITS PRESENCE, THE PALESTINIANS ARE UNLIKELY TO UNDERTAKE MASSIVE ATTACKS AGAINST MARJAYOUN, SUCH AS OCCURRED LAST YEAR. THE LEBANESE CAN AND WILL COPE WITH MINOR ATTACKS THEMSELVES. LEWIS

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